

Steve Whitacre
**SESSION 1 | The Will of God
& How to Find It**

I. INTRODUCTION

Some common approaches to decision-making:

- the common-senser:
- the fleecer:
- the review reader:
- the open door policy:
- the tummy tickler:

II. WHAT IS “THE WILL OF GOD”?

- God’s secret will:
- God’s revealed will:

“The will of God” in Scripture

God’s will is for us...

1. ...to live holy, set-apart lives.
 - *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.” (1 Thessalonians 4:3–8).*

2. ...to always rejoice, pray, and give thanks.
 - *“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).*

3. ...to know God’s will so we can bear fruit and know him better.
 - *“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.” (Colossians 1:9–12).*

4. ...to be filled with the Holy Spirit
 - *“Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5:17–21).*

*adapted from Kevin DeYoung, *Just Do Something*, 58–62

“Simply put, God’s will is for your growth in Christlikeness.” Kevin DeYoung, *Just Do Something*, 61.

“Inward discernment of the best and holiest thing to do is always a fruit of faith, repentance, consecration, and transformation by the Holy Spirit.” J. I. Packer, *God’s Plans for You*, 99.

III. DECISIONS TAKE FAITH

We have good reasons to be full of faith that God will lead us in our decision-making.

1. God is near us and in us by his Spirit
 - “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20).

- “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” (John 14:16–17).

2. God leads us by his Word

- “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105).
- “Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling!” (Psalm 43:3).

3. God helps us through his people

- “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.” (Proverbs 11:14).
- “We must never be too proud to take advice from persons wiser and godlier than ourselves. Personal guidance that we believe we have received by an inner nudge from the Lord needs to be checked with believers who are capable of recognizing unrealism, delusion, and folly when they see it. The Holy Spirit regularly uses the fellowship of the body of Christ to deepen our discernment of God’s will.” J. I. Packer, *God’s Plans for You*, 100.

4. God is not hiding from us

- “You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.” (John 15:14–16).

5. God is at work in our decisions for our good

- “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28).

6. God leads us to faith-filled action

- “Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:3–4).

IV. FOUR STEPS TO MAKING WISE DECISIONS

*Based on Kevin DeYoung's book, *Just Do Something*.

"I don't doubt that the Holy Spirit guides your decisions from within when you make them with the intention of pleasing God. The error would be to think that He speaks *only* within whereas in reality He speaking also through Scripture, the Church, Christian friends, books, etc." C. S. Lewis, *Letters of C. S. Lewis*.

1. Know the counsel of the Lord (read the Scriptures)

2. Get the counsel of wise and godly friends

3. Pray & depend on the Holy Spirit

4. Decide